governmental organizations for establishment and maintenance of old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare units' non-institutional service centres and constructions of old age homes and multi service centres.

Additionally, 10 Kg of foodgrain is distributed to each destitute elderly every month under "Annapurna Scheme" of the Ministry of Rural Development, separate queue system for the elderly is operational in hospitals, elder citizens are given priority in telephone connection and grievance redressal by the Department of Telecommunications, concession in fare is provided by the Railways and Civil Aviation Ministries, tax concession are provided by the Ministry of Finance, specific insurance schemes have been designed by the Life Insurance Corporation, New India Insurance, etc. Some public sectors banks also allow higher interest on deposits by the elderly.

(b) The National Old Age Pension Scheme being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development under which old age pension is being disbursed by States/UTs.

Practice of evil customs

†2032. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even now the women have to undergo the phase of evil customs like "Agni-Pariksha" rape of young girls by way of revenge, with craft, shrew, ghost-spirit and sati in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government would launch any well-planned programme to curb such incidents against the women;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (e) Women, in general, have not to undergo the phase of evil customs.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Specific cases as and when reported are appropriately dealt with by law enforcing agencies. Furthermore, several schemes aiming at comprehensive and holistic empowerment of women are already being implemented by various Ministries/Departments. The Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development is implementing an integrated scheme for women empowerment called "Swayamsidha". This scheme aims at convergence of schemes being implemented by various Ministries/Departments of Government of India for empowerment of women.

Pilot project for welfare of disabled in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka

2033. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have proposed a pilot project in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka for the welfare of the disabled in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Council of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof including the budget allocation made; and

(c) the other steps taken to enable the Society to treat the disabled at par with others?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI SATYA BRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PWD Act) seeks to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and their full participation in nation-building. It provides for both preventive and promotional aspect of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, job reservation, rehabilitation and manpower development, creation of barrier-free environment, rehabilitation for persons with disability, unemployment allowance, establishment of homes for persons with severe disability, etc. The Act also provides for grievance redressal mechanism in relation